

Tennessee Schools On Notice 2001–02



System Report: Campbell County Schools

John G. Morgan
Comptroller of the Treasury
Office of Education Accountability
September 2002



STATE OF TENNESSEE

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September 16, 2002

The Honorable John S. Wilder

Speaker of the Senate

The Honorable Jimmy Naifeh

Speaker of the House of Representatives

and

Members of the House and Senate Education Committees

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Tennessee Code Annotated 49-1-602 requires the Office of Education Accountability and the Tennessee Department of Education to conduct a joint study of schools and/or systems placed on notice of probation. In September 2001, the Department and the State Board of Education officially placed 98 schools in 11 systems on notice. This system report is one of 11 addressing the affected school systems.

OEA analysts reviewed aspects of each system, other than curriculum and instruction, which current research indicates may affect student achievement, including governance and management, funding and resources, parent and community involvement, and facility condition. Each report provides recommendations for improvement.

Sincerely,

John G. Morgan

Comptroller of the Treasury

cc: Commissioner Faye Taylor
Department of Education

Tennessee Schools On Notice 2001–02



System Report: Campbell County Schools

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The Office of Education Accountability was created in the Office of the Comptroller of the Treasury by *Tennessee Code Annotated* 4-3-308 to monitor the performance of school boards, superintendents, school districts, schools, and school personnel in accordance with the performance standards set out in the Education Improvement Act or by regulations of the State Board of Education. The office is to conduct such studies, analyses, or audits as it may determine necessary to evaluate education performance and progress, or as may be assigned to it by the Governor or General Assembly.

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CAMPBELL COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Introduction

In 2001, the Tennessee Department of Education identified 98 schools in 11 systems needing to improve student academic performance. The State Board of Education approved the list in September, and the commissioner officially placed the schools on notice. One school in the Campbell County school system is now on notice:

- Stony Fork School

Once schools are on notice, *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-1-602 requires the Department of Education and the Comptroller's Office of Education Accountability to study jointly the schools and/or systems. The study must produce recommendations on how school systems can improve and meet state performance standards. This report is the Office of Education Accountability's portion of the Campbell County school system study.

The Department of Education and the Office of Education Accountability (OEA) determined the two agencies would study schools and systems on notice separately. Each agency designed research protocol to examine areas within its expertise. The department concentrated on curriculum and instruction, and the OEA examined other areas potentially affecting student achievement. The OEA considered the following areas:

- general school, student, and staff information;
- governance and management;
- funding and resources;
- parent, community, and business involvement;
- facilities and climate; and
- class size.

The study addressed individual schools to the extent possible.

The Department of Education contracted with retired educators, referred to as Exemplary Educators, to provide technical assistance to the systems and schools on notice. OEA staff did not meet with Exemplary Educators (EEs) during the joint study because the Department of Education felt interviews with OEA could compromise EEs' relationships with systems and schools. Department of Education staff was also concerned about EEs' time constraints.

Background and Methodology

The 98 Tennessee schools placed on notice failed to meet achievement and growth criteria established by the Tennessee Department of Education under the authority granted in *Tennessee Code Annotated* 49-1-601 – 602, displayed in the following figures. The law states that schools placed on notice must improve student achievement by the end of the first year or be placed on probation. Schools on notice that achieve adequate yearly progress after one year will remain on notice but will be specified as

“improving.”¹ Schools unable to achieve adequate yearly progress can be on probation up to two years before facing sanctions such as reconstitution or alternative governance. The following figures display the criteria developed by the Department of Education to identify schools needing improvement.

K-8 criteria used to place schools on notice:

Achievement criteria

School-wide three-year achievement averages in reading, language arts, and mathematics less than 40 NCE (normal curve equivalent)

Schools on notice have a three-year achievement pattern of 48-73% of their student population in the below average group.

Growth factors (Adequate Yearly Progress)

1. School-wide cumulative three-year value added of 100 percent in reading, language arts, and mathematics
2. Closing the achievement gap by a reduction in the number/percentage of students in the below average group in reading, language arts, mathematics, and writing

Schools on notice failed to meet one or both of the growth factors.

(Source: Tennessee Department of Education, Office of Accountability)

9-12 criteria used to place schools on notice:

Achievement criteria

Achievement levels in Algebra I End of Course, 11th grade writing, and ACT composite

Schools identified as on notice had below average achievement in two or more of these areas.

Growth factors

1. Positive Value Added (meeting predicted targets)
2. Closing the achievement gap by a reduction in the number/percentage of students in below average group
3. Positive trend in reducing dropout rate

Schools on notice failed to meet one or more of the growth factors.

(Source: Tennessee Department of Education, Office of Accountability)

To complete its study, the OEA assigned teams of analysts to the 11 systems with schools on notice. The department provided names of district liaisons who acted as guides through each school system’s administrative structure. At a minimum, staff interviewed the following persons in each system:

- District liaisons designated by Directors of Schools
- Department of Education Regional Directors
- Principals of schools on notice

Other district staff members often participated in the interviews or were interviewed individually. OEA staff also:

- Conducted an extensive literature review of school improvement strategies and low performing schools issues.

¹ With the passage of the 2001 “No Child Left Behind” Act, Tennessee has merged its accountability system with federal law. According to the merged systems, schools must show improvement for two consecutive years to move off notice completely.

- Reviewed audits of systems with schools on notice.
- Participated in staff training focused on school visits.
- Observed training for Exemplary Educators conducted by the Department of Education and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc. (AEL) (contractor for Exemplary Educators program).
- Attended school board meetings in some systems with schools on notice.
- Requested and reviewed available documentation from each system.

The OEA's study resulted in 11 system reports. Each system report includes background information, strengths, areas for improvement, and recommendations.

See Appendix A for a list of persons interviewed and documents reviewed regarding Campbell County Schools. See Appendix B for the current status of schools on notice. See Appendix C for the system's response to the report.

Common Characteristics of On-notice Schools and State-level Concerns

Common characteristics of low-performing schools

Research indicates that schools with low achievement are disproportionately likely to have a large number of students from low income and minority background be located in communities with significant concentrations of poverty and its associated problems

have low standards and expectations for their students

have a weak curriculum

have limited parental involvement

employ less experienced and less well-qualified teachers and other instructional staff

have high staff turnover rates

have lower morale than in other schools

have a school environment that lacks order and discipline²

SREB notes that separate studies of school performance in North Carolina and Texas found common characteristics among low-performing schools similar to those listed above: weak leadership, inexperienced teachers, high turnover in faculty, and a lack of focus on state content standards.³

Common characteristics of Tennessee's on-notice schools

OEA staff found that no single system with schools on notice could be characterized by every factor listed above. However, at least some of the factors are true of most of the systems and schools. Several have large numbers of students from low income and minority backgrounds and have large concentrations of poverty in their communities. Most have limited parental involvement, many have high staff turnover rates, and some

² U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Under Secretary and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, January 2001, *School Improvement Report: Executive Order on Actions for Turning Around Low-Performing Schools*, Washington, D.C., p. 4.

³ Jim Watts, *Getting Results with Accountability: Rating Schools, Assisting Schools, Improving Schools*, Southern Regional Education Board, p. 18.

employ a large number of teachers that are less experienced and less qualified (as shown by the number of teachers with waivers and permits).

In addition, analysts noted two other conditions present among many of Tennessee's on-notice schools: high student mobility and a sense of isolation, even in urban settings. High mobility is shown to lower achievement for individual students, but may also have a general effect of lowering school- and district-wide performance.⁴

Some of the rural on-notice schools are located in extremely geographically isolated areas, with few opportunities for students to experience other settings. Principals at several urban on-notice schools noted that large numbers of their students had limited experiences with opportunities that, in many cases, are geographically near them. Some principals indicated that many Memphis City students had never been in downtown Memphis before, for example, or visited the Memphis Zoo.

State-level findings in Tennessee's systems with schools on notice

An overall analysis of the findings from each of Tennessee's 11 systems with schools on notice during the 2001-02 school year revealed some common issues, which can be grouped into seven major areas:

- student readiness;
- teacher shortages;
- technology;
- school accreditation;
- data challenges;
- funding; and
- placing schools on notice and providing technical assistance.

A separate state-level report provides detailed findings and recommendations regarding these issues. In the 11 system reports, this symbol ★ denotes an area for which a corresponding conclusion and recommendation appear in the state-level report. The state-level report may be accessed at www.comptroller.state.tn.us/orea/reports or a printed copy may be requested from the Office of Education Accountability at (615)401-7911.

⁴ David Kerbow, Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed at Risk, "Patterns of Urban Student Mobility and Local School Reform," October 1996, <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/Reports/report05entire.html> (accessed March 14, 2002).

Campbell County School System Background Characteristics

SCHOOLS AND STAFF 2000-01	
Number of schools	16
Number of schools on notice	1
Number of teachers	398
Number of teacher waivers	11
Number of teacher permits	4
Average teacher salary	\$32,127

(Source: Campbell County Report Card 2001)

FUNDING 2000-01	
Total expenditures	\$33,812,862
Per-pupil expenditures	\$5,614
Federal revenue	15%
State revenue	61.9%
<i>includes BEP state share</i>	<i>\$19,864,000</i>
Local revenue	23.1%
<i>includes BEP local share</i>	<i>\$4,539,000</i>

(Source: Basic Education Program Spreadsheet 2000-01; Tennessee Department of Education Annual Report 2001, Campbell County Report Card 2001)

Campbell County's per-pupil expenditure of \$5,614 is less than the statewide average of \$6,055 and national average of \$7,436. The average teacher salary in Campbell County is \$32,127 compared to a statewide average of \$37,431 in the 2000-01 school year. Campbell County relies more heavily on state funding than many other systems throughout the state, whose average state contribution is 47 percent.⁵

The Campbell County school system and schools receive several grants, including Title I, Title II, Title VI, Reading Excellence Act, and Comprehensive School Reform. The system uses Title II funds for subject-area staff development, and individual schools expend Title IV money for library books and instructional supplies.⁶ The system also receives about "\$100,000 per year in E-Rate discounts, and reimbursements, for local telecommunications service and Internet services."⁷

⁵ Tennessee Department of Education, "Statewide Report Card 2001," <http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/rptcrd01/state1.htm> (accessed February 15, 2002).

⁶ Public Schools of Campbell County, Materials Center Site, July 31, 2001, <http://www.campbell.k12.tn.us/Matdept/Materials.htm> (accessed July 30, 2002).

⁷ Campbell County Board of Education, "Technology Plan, January 1, 2002 – June 30, 2005," <http://www.campbell.k12.tn.us/tplan/2002techplan.htm> (accessed July 31, 2002).

STUDENT POPULATION 2000-01	
Number of students	6221
African American	.5%
Caucasian	99.3%
Other	0
English language learners	0
Special education	13.7%
Free and reduced lunch	67.9%

(Source: Campbell County Report Card 2001)

Additional System Information

Campbell County is in East Tennessee, bordered to the north by Kentucky and adjacent to four Tennessee counties. Campbell County's almost 40,000 residents enjoy the Cumberland Mountains and Norris Lake. The county is within 35 miles of Knoxville and the University of Tennessee. Roane State Community College has an offsite location in Lafollette. The county seat is Jacksboro.

The Campbell County school system is the only public school system in the county. The county's two active private schools, both serving students in kindergarten through 8th grade, are in Jellico and Lafollette.⁸ Campbell County Schools has an open enrollment policy for students to attend the public school of their choice; however, parents must provide transportation to out-of-zone schools.

Public schools in Campbell County serve many students living in poverty. Almost 70 percent of public school students receive free or reduced-price lunches, more than the state average of 42.9 percent.⁹ Campbell County's median household income of \$23,314 is much lower than the state (\$32,047). The county also has more persons (21.3 percent) and children (28.9 percent) living below the poverty line than the state (13.6 and 18.9 percent, respectively).¹⁰

The school system uses various strategies to combat the effects of poverty on education. Campbell County operates an Adult High School. According to the system's web site, approximately 23 adults are enrolled in the program. The county also has two Family Resource Centers (FRCs).¹¹ Each center employs a director to oversee daily operations. The centers collaborate with various community agencies to provide services to schools and parents. The Jellico Elementary center opened in 1995-96, and the Parent Resource Center in Duff opened in 1994-95. Neither center is accessible to Stony Fork however,

⁸ Tennessee Department of Education, SDE Online Directory, <http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/sde> (accessed July 30, 2002)

⁹ Tennessee Department of Education, "Statewide Report Card 2001," <http://www.k-12.state.tn.us/rptcrd01/state1.htm> (accessed February 15, 2002).

¹⁰ "Campbell County, Tennessee," U.S. Census Bureau, State and County *QuickFacts*, July 3, 2001, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/47/47013.html> (accessed July 30, 2002).

¹¹ The General Assembly created a grant program in 1992 to allow local education agencies to establish FRCs to coordinate state and community services to help meet the needs of families with children (T.C.A. 49-2-115).

the system's only school on notice.¹²

The county is also home to the Community Friends Mentoring Program, a partnership of Campbell County's Promise – The Alliance for Youth, the school system, and the board of education. The program began in 1992 and pairs adult community mentors with at-risk students selected by school officials. Mentors visit the students during school hours and sometimes continue their relationship through the summer months.¹³ System officials indicate that there are also private adopt-a-school contributors in the county, though system-level business participation is low.¹⁴ The Appalachian Rural Systemic Initiative additionally provides the system with professional development and technology resources.¹⁵

¹² Office of Education Accountability, Family Resource Center survey, Summer 2001.

¹³ Campbell County's Promise – The Alliance For Youth and Community Friends Mentoring Program, "The Mentor Handbook, pamphlet.

¹⁴ Billie Olvey, Campbell County Schools, "Re: State Comptroller Study," E-mail to the author, August 13, 2002.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Schools on Notice Background Characteristics

STONY FORK SCHOOL 2000-01	
Grades served	K-12
Number of students	60
African American	0
Caucasian	100%
Other	0
English language learners*	0
Special education	0
Free and reduced lunch	100%
Number of teachers employed	7
Number of administrators	1

*(Source: Stony Fork School Report Card 2001; *Principal interview; Tennessee Department of Education School Approval Database; **Special education figures on school report cards represent the percentage of students taking the TCAP that were identified as special education students and does not represent students in grades K-2 or 9-12.)*

Stony Fork School is located on Cross Mountain near Stony Fork Creek in Caryville. The school is “connected to the...county by a narrow, graveled, mostly one-lane road” that is impassable to school buses.¹⁶ One state official noted that Stony Fork School may be the most geographically isolated school in Tennessee.¹⁷ The small school serves students in all grades, but total enrollment at the school has not been above 83 in eight years.¹⁸ In school year 2000-01, 62 students were enrolled at Stony Fork School.¹⁹ School officials tailor the school program to the unique geographical position, as evidenced by Stony Fork’s mission statement.

This school and its faculty exist to serve the children and their families of this isolated mountain community, by providing education to them from kindergarten through twelfth grade to the best of our ability. If we accomplish this adequately as we progress through the future years, our students will be able to score on the various tests at the level of the standards set for scores by the county and state Master Plan.²⁰

The Stony Fork School building was erected in 1951 and opened in fall 1952. Stony Fork teachers use four regular classrooms, a classroom combined with the library, a vocational classroom, a special education classroom, and a computer lab to educate the students. Children at Stony Fork are in multiple grade level homerooms of the following configurations: K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12. The school has one modular unit housing a small, part-time Head Start program. The 2002 TACIR School Facility survey rates each classroom and Stony Fork School’s overall condition “good.”

¹⁶ Stony Fork School Improvement Plan 2001-2002 Update, p. 6.

¹⁷ Interview with Dwain Burke, Regional Director, Tennessee Department of Education, January 9, 2002.

¹⁸ Stony Fork School Improvement Plan 2001-2002 Update, p. 8.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 4.

Hugh Perry has been principal of Stony Fork for 32 years. He indicates that all Stony Fork students ride the bus to school. The students do not have access to a Family Resource Center but receive the services of a health clinic once a week. The Head Start program beside the school also serves 12 students one day a week, accompanied by home visits.²¹ According to the principal, the school does not generally offer before- and after-school programming. The school does provide students access to some sports activities, a 4-H Club, the Girls Scouts of America, and Business Professionals of America.²² When students graduate from Stony Fork School, half leave to attend technical school or college, and the other half find employment off the mountain.²³

Stony Fork School is located in a very economically depressed area of Campbell County. Logging and coal mining provided jobs in the past; however, both have ceased operations. According to the school improvement plan, the area's unemployment rate is roughly 70 percent.²⁴ Many families live in dilapidated housing owned by the coal companies. School and system officials note that many parents also have low levels of educational attainment, and some are illiterate.

Stony Fork has received several grants in the past few school years. The system applied for and received \$36,379 in Title I Accountability funds in 2001-02. The funds are "to assist...in planning for improved student achievement" at Stony Fork School because of the school's identification for School Improvement. The school received Goals 2000 grants in 1999 and 2001. The 1999 grant of \$19,851 funded a reading program. In 2001, the grant of \$26,455 covered the Stony Fork Extended Learning Center. The school also received a Reading Excellence Act grant for use through August 2004. Stony Forks' regular Title I allocation purchases equipment and pays one teaching position. The school has no business or community partnerships.

²¹ Billia Olvey, Campbell County Schools, "Re: State Comptroller Study," E-mail to the author, August 13, 2002.

²² Stony Fork School website, "Selected Student Activities," http://www.campbell.k12.tn.us/sfk12_files/banner.htm (accessed August 13, 2002).

²³ Interview with Hugh Perry, Principal, Stony Fork School, May 13, 2002.

²⁴ Stony Fork School Improvement Plan 2001-2002 Update, p. 6.

Analysis and Conclusions

Strengths

Because of Stony Fork's small student population, the school provides small class sizes. In the mid-1980s, Tennessee conducted the Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) project, which determined that smaller class sizes were beneficial to student learning. STAR teachers reported that smaller classes allowed them to better monitor student behavior and learning, provide more immediate and individualized instruction, better tailor instruction to each child's ability and needs, and use various instructional approaches.²⁵ Students at small schools like Stony Fork may benefit from familiarity with the teachers from year to year, as well as increased personal attention. The following chart contains split-level enrollment numbers for Stony Fork School.

Stony Fork School Split-Level Class Size, 1994-95 through 2001-02*

	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-99	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02
K-2	13	11	11	15	17	16	16	13
3-4	10	8	3	6	7	8	11	11
5-6	9	11	9	7	2	7	9	9
7-8	19	15	8	11	11	10	6	8
9-12	27	38	36	44	35	24	20	16
Total	78	83	67	83	72	65	62	57

*Source: Stony Fork School Improvement Plan, 2001-02 Update, page 8, *Note: Enrollment numbers differ slightly from ADM numbers on the school report card.*

In 2001-02, Campbell County Schools achieved the EIA requirements for class size maximums and averages. Stony Fork School met the requirement early with no deficiencies in the 2000-01 school year.²⁶ Some classes and schools in Campbell County did not meet state-mandated grade level averages and class size maximums in 2000-01.²⁷ However, systems were not required to meet the EIA class size requirements until the 2001-02 school year. (TCA 49-1-104 requires that by the 2001-02 school year, no class shall exceed the prescribed maximum size and no school would be allowed to exceed the required average class size for its grade level.) School systems avoid significant fines by meeting all class size requirements.

Stony Fork has an above-average number of computers per pupil. Specifically, the school has 39 computers available for student use. In 1999-2000, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) developed a technology model for a well-equipped school.²⁸

²⁵ Jessica O'Connell and Stuart C. Smith, "Capitalizing on Small Class Size," April 2000, Eric Digest No. 136, EDD4404-30, http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed440430.html (accessed July 30, 2002).

²⁶ Tennessee Department of Education, School Approval, Class size spreadsheet, 2001-02.

²⁷ Tennessee Department of Education, School Approval, Class size and teacher information spreadsheet, 2000-01.

²⁸ Lou Parker and William R. Thomas, "Guidelines for Technology Equipment Selection and Use: An SREB Model for Schools and Campuses," Southern Regional Education Board, June 1999, <http://www.sreb.org/programs/EdTech/pubs/techselectguidelines/EdTechGuidelines.pdf> (accessed March 11, 2002).

Specifically, SREB recommends that schools have a minimum of one computer per five students, late model computers, and a high level of Internet connectivity.²⁹ Stony Fork has one computer for every one and one-half students, which is better than the SREB-recommended student-computer ratio. This is also better than Tennessee's average student-computer ratio of 5.4 students for every computer.³⁰ According to the system technology plan, Stony Fork School has the best student-to-computer ratio in the system. The high number of computers connected to the Internet at Stony Fork (30) may also help provide access to curriculum not available otherwise.

Campbell County Schools and Stony Fork School appear to be focusing on technology to improve student achievement. The Campbell County Board of Education approved a technology plan in 2002 with the goal of "enhancing the learning process for all students."³¹ According to the plan, Campbell County has 2,078 computers for staff and student use. Of these, 1,982 are located in the system's regular K-12 schools. The Campbell County school system has one computer for every 3.14 students (as divided by 2001 system ADM), which is also better than the above-mentioned SREB and Tennessee ratios.³² According to the system plan, technology has been a system focus area:

During the past few years, a substantial investment has been made into computers, software, network infrastructure, and Internet access within the CCSD. All schools currently have some level of site-wide Internet access. Local area computer networks have been installed at each school, and are tied together into a district wide computer network. The majority of staff has access to up-to-date computer equipment. All schools have at least one computer lab for multiple student use. Many individual classrooms have multiple computers for classroom use.³³

Stony Fork School has also prioritized the increased use of technology. The recent school improvement plan notes a "number one priority need was determined to be computers, educational software, and effective computer lab scheduling to motivate and enhance existing programs."³⁴ Despite past complaints about inadequate technology training,³⁵ system and school officials noted in fall 2002 that Stony Fork teachers have participated in system-provided training and actively use various computer programs in the classroom. Stony Fork School, which has its own web site, also has an excellent student-to-computer ratio and offered an extended-day computer class in 2000-01.³⁶

²⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁰ "Technology Counts, 2001," *Education Week*, May 10, 2001, pp. 70-105.

³¹ Campbell County Board of Education, "Technology Plan, January 1, 2002 – June 30, 2005," <http://www.campbell.k12.tn.us/tplan/2002techplan.htm> (accessed July 31, 2002).

³² "Technology Counts, 2001," *Education Week*, May 10, 2001, pp. 70-105.

³³ Campbell County Board of Education, "Technology Plan, January 1, 2002 – June 30, 2005," <http://www.campbell.k12.tn.us/tplan/2002techplan.htm> (accessed July 31, 2002).

³⁴ Stony Fork School Improvement Plan 2001-2002 Update, p. 3

³⁵ Title I Accountability Funds for School Improvement, August 2001, State Department of Education – Campbell County Schools and Stony Fork Application, p. 13.

³⁶ Interview with Hugh Perry, Principal, Stony Fork School, May 13, 2002.

Stony Fork School provides a safe, but accessible, school environment. Security is a growing issue of concern for schools across the county, and the implementation of precautionary measures has become an expected role of modern school administrators. Though limited, educational research supports the common assumption that disorder (i.e., high rates of student delinquent behavior) negatively affects student achievement.³⁷ According to its report card, Stony Fork had no expulsions and one suspension in the 2000-01 school year. As well, the school had no Zero Tolerance violations.

In addition, surveys conducted for the school improvement plan indicate that most students, parents, and teachers feel Stony Fork is a safe, friendly place to educate children. Students feel that the school has an orderly environment with clear rules. Students also noted that the learning climate is positive. Teachers feel that the school focuses on the child and family, and parents feel welcome at the school and are made to feel important.

★ **Stony Fork School is working with three state-assigned Exemplary Educators and school system staff to make school-level improvements.** School officials indicate that the EEs reviewed and made suggestions to the school improvement plan and helped write grant proposals. Additionally, the district's Title I Director is coordinating improvement services to assist the school. School officials note that the central office has been supportive.

Areas for Improvement

★ **Stony Fork School's extreme physical isolation prevents the school's students, parents, and teachers from accessing many resources.** Though Stony Fork has few suspensions and expulsions, school officials cannot feasibly send students to the county's alternative school. The road to the school also prohibits mass field trips and limits access to Family Resource Centers, the Adult High School, and the Community Mentoring Partnership Program. The school's isolation also creates the necessity for teachers to miss school completely for staff development, and Stony Fork is unable to secure an adopt-a-school contributor. Additionally, the system cut enrichment programs because of fiscal restraints, worsening the availability of art and extracurricular activities. Studies have shown that "isolation restricts rural schools and communities from making use of urban-based resources that might enhance educational programs – museums, research libraries, and colleges and universities."³⁸

Stony Fork School experiences low levels of parental involvement in academics.

School officials, system officials, and the school improvement plan reference this problem. In surveys conducted for the school improvement plan, faculty noted that too few "students and parents are involved in helping to make the school

³⁷ Paul E. Barton, Richard J. Coley, and Harold Wenglinsky, "Order in the Classroom: Violence, Discipline, and Student Achievement," ETS Policy Information Center, October 1998, <http://ftp.ets.org/pub/res/order.pdf> (accessed April 15, 2002).

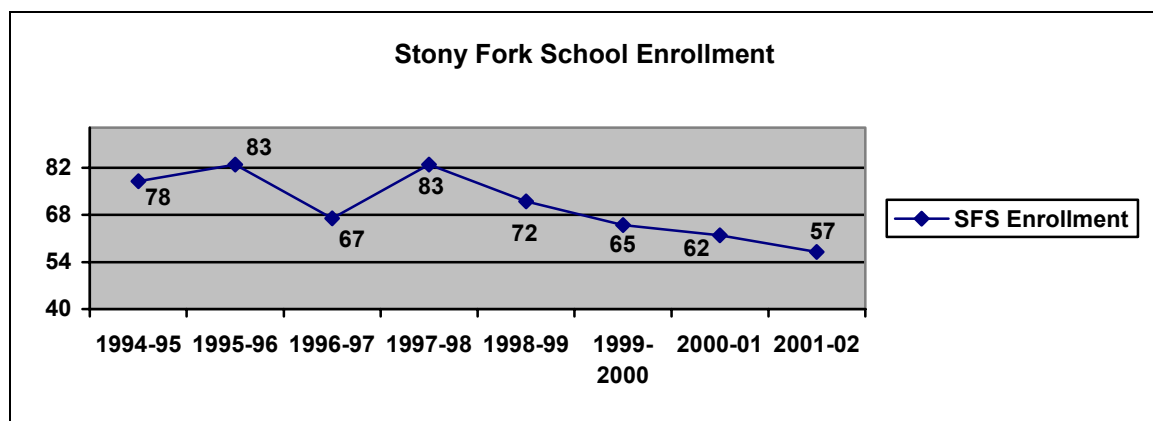
³⁸ Maynard and Howley, p. 1, referred to Capper, C.A. (1993), "Rural community influences on effective school practices," *Journal of Educational Administration*.

environment...enjoyable.” Increasing parent involvement is a priority area for the school, which has a parent organization, reading volunteers, and parents who serve on the school improvement planning team. In school year 2001-02, parents also assisted in providing bookshelves for an elementary library, and the Campbell County Board of Education recognized one Stony Fork parents for school involvement. Stony Fork School used extended contract and Goals 2000 funds to operate the Extended Learning Program that year, which included afterschool computer lab instruction for parents.

The school’s application for Title I Accountability Funds for School Improvement notes additional strategies to involve parents. The school will provide parenting workshops, a checkout center with computers and software for home use, and a parent-communications coordinator to “organize and motivate parents.”³⁹ The application also includes an evaluation plan so the school can measure increased parental involvement.

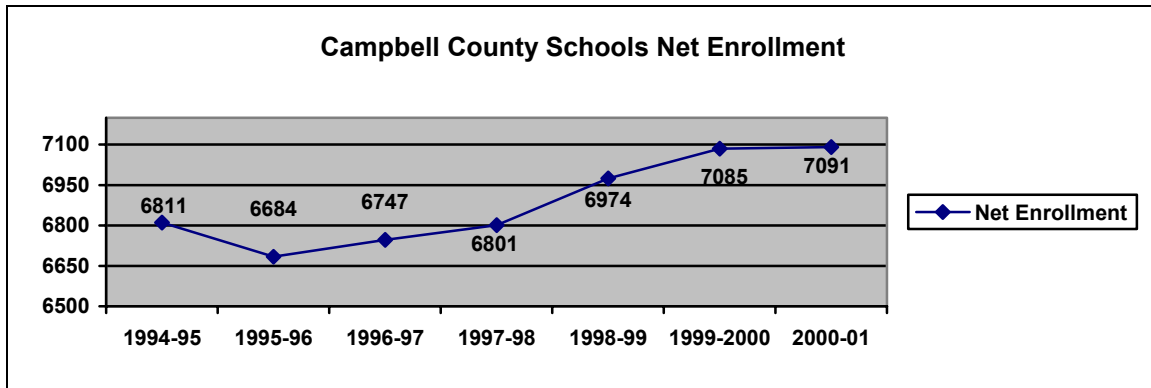
Several factors may contribute to Stony Fork’s inability to engage parents. According to surveys conducted for the school improvement plan, some teachers and students do not feel students and parents experience programming that meets their interests and needs. Parental involvement programs directed at parents in low-income households also face the complex sociological task of changing long-established patterns of behavior. Parents in low-income households are often under-educated and not used to participating in academic activities with their children. Stony Fork’s school improvement plan notes that over half of the parenting population never graduated from high school. Although parental involvement improves the academic achievement of students, creating and maintaining that involvement can be a tedious assignment for already over-burdened teachers and administrators to undertake.

Enrollment levels at Stony Fork School have decreased for five consecutive school years. Since 1998, enrollment numbers at the school have decreased. Alternately, Campbell County’s net enrollment has increased consistently since 1995-96. The following charts represent changes in the school and system enrollment levels.



(Source: Stony Fork School Improvement Plan 2001-02)

³⁹ Title I Accountability Funds for School Improvement, August 2001, State Department of Education – Campbell County Schools and Stony Fork School Application, p. 15.



(Source: Tennessee Department of Education Annual Statistical Reports)

Sagging enrollment is a growing concern for rural schools across the country. Some shrinking schools have aided this problem by sharing staff and equipment; however, Stony Fork's location limits the feasibility of these options. Other schools have used grantwriting to supplement equipment purchases and strengthen school programming.

★ **The Campbell County school system may have an inadequate number of technology support staff to ensure proper computer maintenance and training.** In its technology model (cited above), the SREB states that availability of training and technical support is critical for successful technology programs.⁴⁰ The report provides no explicit recommendations but suggests schools and systems should have access to consulting and "trouble-shooting" services that are familiar with the educational environment.⁴¹ As of January 2002, the Campbell County school system employed two technology coordinators to maintain 2,078 computers.

The TD also usually provides training. "During the 2000-2001 school year approximately 90 staff members attended TD training sessions."⁴² According to the system technology plan, the TD offered no official technology staff development in the 2001-02 school year because it did not "have the resources to provide an adequate, on-going staff development program."⁴³ The school system needs additional technical support to ensure successful implementation of the system technology plan.⁴⁴

★ **Many students who start kindergarten at Stony Fork School are not prepared to learn.** According to the school improvement plan, of the five students taking the Brigance test to enter kindergarten in 2001-02, several were unable to complete simple tasks like counting to ten, copying a line, and saying the alphabet. Almost all students who enter Stony Fork come from a low socioeconomic background, which is often

⁴⁰ Lou Parker and William R. Thomas, "Guidelines for Technology Equipment Selection and Use: An SREB Model for Schools and Campuses," Southern Regional Education Board, June 1999, <http://www.sreb.org/programs/EdTech/pubs/techselectguidelines/EdTechGuidelines.pdf> (accessed March 11, 2002).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Campbell County Board of Education. "Technology Plan, January 1, 2002 – June 30, 2005," <http://www.campbell.k12.tn.us/tplan/2002techplan.htm> (accessed July 31, 2002).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

correlated with low academic achievement.⁴⁵ School officials note that the preschool opportunities are limited, though most students who enter kindergarten participated in the Stony Fork Head Start program. The program only operates one day a week plus home visits, and school officials note that students do not do much academically.

Research shows that high-quality preschool is particularly important for low-income children. Several studies indicate that pre-kindergarten programs have a significant positive effect on children's future school performance and other life experiences, particularly those children who are at risk of failure because of poverty. Studies have found that when at-risk children attend high-quality preschool programs, fewer are placed in special education in later grades, fewer are retained to repeat a grade, and more graduate from high school. Preschool programs also have been found to contribute to lower juvenile delinquency rates.⁴⁶ In addition, a 2000 RAND study identified pre-kindergarten programs as a significant factor in those states that have shown the greatest academic gains in the last decade.⁴⁷

Stony Fork School experiences high levels of staff and student absenteeism. The school received an "F" on the 2001 school report card for attendance at all grade levels, and system officials indicate that the staff attendance rate is around 89 percent. Inclement weather likely prevents students and teachers from attending some days, especially since none of the teachers nor the principal lives in the area. System officials indicate that teachers also miss some days for staff development because of the driving distance to the central office.

System and school officials indicate that operating Stony Fork School requires substantial investments above other county school allocations. According to one official, the system spends approximately \$13,000 per pupil to keep the school open, though the county-wide expenditure per pupil is less than \$6,000. The system has no way to transport Stony Fork students to other public schools, so operating the school is inevitable.

Stony Fork School may require additional resources to identify and serve its population of special education students. The school report card states that the school tested no special education students in 2001; however, this report is misleading. The school serves some students in special education, though the school principal says that more need the services but refuse them. The school had seven special education students in the 2001-02 school year, approximately 12 percent of the student population.⁴⁸ Additionally, the school's special education teacher has provisional teaching credentials.

⁴⁵ Executive Summary, Early Learning, Later Success: The Carolina Abecedarian Project, http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~abc/embargoed/executive_summary.htm (accessed May 31, 2002).

⁴⁶ *Why pre-k?*, A Legislative Staff Briefing Paper, the Office of Education Accountability and the Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, March 2001, p. 2.

⁴⁷ David W. Grissmer, et al., *Improving Student Achievement: What NAEP State Test Scores Tell Us*, RAND Corporation, July 25, 2000, p. xxvi.

⁴⁸ Stony Fork School Improvement Plan 2001-2002 Update.

Recommendations

The Campbell County Commission should explore the feasibility of improving the road to Stony Fork to the extent that a small bus could travel on it. The system indicates that transportation is one of the biggest problems impeding the education of students at Stony Fork. Improved accessibility could help Stony Fork students participate in educational opportunities available in other areas.

Campbell County should explore economic and community development strategies that would benefit the residents of the Stony Fork community. The county may wish to explore relevant federal grant opportunities. The Rural Community Empowerment Program has appropriated millions of federal dollars to benefit rural partnerships. The program designated parts of five neighboring counties as the Clinch-Powell Enterprise Community in 1999. Since that time, the area has received funds to focus on economic development, workforce development, and education.⁴⁹ The program has not announced if it will sponsor additional application opportunities; however, other similar federal programs are active. The Department of Housing and Urban Development releases annual Community Development Block Grants that are “an increasingly important catalyst for economic development activities that expand job and business opportunities for lower income persons and neighborhoods.”⁵⁰

★ **The Campbell County Board of Education should ensure that the system’s technology department is adequate to assist all schools and faculty.** The system’s current technology plan provides for all staff to receive annual technology training. The plan also adds a technology trainer position to the TD and contains an evaluation plan.

★ **Campbell County Schools should consider providing a full time preschool program at Stony Fork School to help prepare students entering kindergarten.** The system may wish to explore state grant funds to cover expenses for a full time preschool program at Stony Fork. The system could also supplement the Head Start program by funding a “traveling teacher” to work there part time.

Campbell County Schools should consider alternative methods of offering adult education in the Stony Fork Community. Such methods could include using the school’s excellent computer availability to emphasize literacy. The system may wish to seek grants to offer courses. Increased adult education opportunities could provide a method of increasing parental involvement at the school.

The Campbell County school system should assist Stony Fork School to identify and serve all students requiring special education. Identifying students needing intervention at an early age may help students move into regular education in later grades.

⁴⁹ Clinch-Powell Enterprise Community Online, <http://www.clinchpowell.net/ec.html> (accessed August 2, 2002).

⁵⁰ Housing and Urban Development, Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Communities Program, <http://www.hud.gov/progdsc/cdbgent.cfm> (accessed August 2, 2002).

Campbell County Schools should continue to assist Stony Fork’s improvement process and should continue to encourage and support school grantwriting. The system may also wish to fund “floating” teachers who would serve the school part-time.

Campbell County Schools should consider implementing online professional development and secondary courses at Stony Fork School. The May 9, 2002, issue of *Education Week* reports that 12 states have already established online high school programs and five others are developing them.⁵¹ West Virginia, for example, began offering a virtual high school in July 2000. In the 2002 school year, 468 students in 31 counties and 52 schools took web-based classes in math, social studies, and foreign languages.⁵² West Virginia recently contracted with Florida to provide online high school classes for some of its rural mountain schools. SREB estimates that over 50,000 middle and high school students across the country take online courses.⁵³

Although many question whether online classes are an effective substitute for more traditional learning methods, the strategy could provide supplemental classes for schools like Stony Fork that cannot offer them any other way. Online coursework could also benefit teachers at Stony Fork who have noted the lack of adequate technology training. If the system implements online coursework, it should add this strategy to its technology plan. SREB offers several strategies to cover the expenses for online courses – including sharing costs between agencies, using federal ESEA allocations, and creating state policy – though it notes that online courses may be less expensive than traditional coursework.

⁵¹ “E-Defining Education,” *Education Week*, May 9, 2002, Volume XXI, Number 35, p. 10.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p.94.

⁵³ Southern Regional Education Board, “Funding Web-based Courses for K-12 Students to Meet State Educational Goals,” 2002, brief available online at www.sreb.org.

Appendix A

Individuals Interviewed and Documents Reviewed

Interviews

Hugh Perry, Principal, Stony Fork School

Warren Heatherly, Director of Schools, Campbell County Board of Education

David Chitwood, Title I Supervisor, Campbell County Schools

Dwain Burke, Regional Director, Tennessee Department of Education

Documents

Stony Fork School Improvement Plan 2001-2002 Update

Campbell County District Improvement Plan, 1997-98

TACIR School Facility Survey of Stony Fork School, 2002

Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Campbell County 2000-01, 1999-2000

Campbell County Technology Plan, 2002-2005

Campbell County Web site

Stony Fork School Web site

Application for Title I Accountability Funds for School Improvement, 2001

Appendix B
Current Status of Schools On Notice
as reported by the Department of Education

(Note: This list includes Title I schools in School Improvement that were not on notice in 2001-02.)

Achieved good standing by showing two years of adequate progress
2000-01 and 2001-02

School system	Schools in good standing
Anderson County	Grand Oaks
Campbell County	West Lafollette
Cocke County	Grassy Fork Northwest
Cumberland County	Pine View
Fayette County	Central Elementary LaGrange Moscow
Humboldt City	East End Elementary Main Street Elementary
Henderson County	Scotts Hill School
Morgan County	Oakdale Petros Joyner
Harriman City	Central Intermediate
Memphis City	Cherokee Elementary Douglass Elementary Evans Elementary Pyramid Academy

Schools making adequate progress
2001-02

School system	Schools making adequate progress
Blount County	Eagleton Elementary
Campbell County	Stony Fork
Carter County	Range Elementary
Claiborne County	Powell Valley Elementary
Cleveland City	Arnold Elementary Blythe-Bower Elementary
Davidson County	Shwab Elementary West End Middle Pearl Cohn High School Whites Creek High School
Fayette County	Jefferson Elementary Southwest Elementary Fayette Ware High School Somerville Elementary

School system	Schools making adequate progress
Grainger County	Joppa Elementary Washburn Elementary
Grundy County	Tracy Elementary
Hamblen County	Lincoln Heights Elementary
Hamilton County	Calvin Donaldson Howard Elementary Howard School of Academics and Technology
Hawkins County	Clinch School
Kingsport City	Roosevelt Elementary
Knox County	Sarah M. Greene Elementary
Lawrence County	Ingram Sowell Elementary
Maury County	James Woody/Mt. Pleasant Elementary
Perry County	Perry County High School
Putnam County	Uffleman Elementary
Rutherford County	Holloway High School
Union County	Luttrell Elementary Maynardville Elementary
Wayne County	Frank Hughes
Memphis City	Berclair Elementary Bethel Grove Elementary Coleman Elementary Cummings Elementary Dunn Avenue Elementary Egypt Elementary Kingsbury Elementary Klondike Elementary Lauderdale Elementary Oakshire Elementary Raleigh-Bartlett Scenic Hills Brookmeade Elementary Corning Elementary Fairley Elementary Frayser Elementary Graceland Elementary Levi Elementary Lincoln Elementary Locke Elementary

School system	Schools making adequate progress
Memphis City (continued)	Orleans Elementary Raineshaven Elementary Raleigh Egypt Middle School Shannon Elementary Sharpe Elementary Sheffield Elementary Trezevant High School Whitney Elementary Melrose High School Northside High School Oakhaven High School Whitehaven High School

**Schools failing to make adequate improvement 2001-02
Recommended for probation 2002-03**

School System	Probation
Claiborne County	Clairfield Elementary
Davidson County	Kirkpatrick Elementary Warner Elementary Maplewood High School Stratford High School
Fayette County	Northwest Elementary
Hamilton County	Chattanooga Middle School Dalewood Middle School East Lake Elementary John P. Franklin Middle School Hardy Elementary Orchard Knob Elementary Orchard Knob Middle School Woodmore Elementary
Hardeman County	Grand Junction Elementary
Knox County	Maynard Elementary Lonsdale Elementary
Memphis City	Airways Middle School Carver High School Chickasaw Junior High Cypress Junior High Denver Elementary

School System	Probation
Memphis City (continued)	Dunbar Elementary Fairview Junior High Frayser High School Geeter Middle School Georgian Hills Elementary Georgian Hills Junior High Hamilton Middle School Hawkins Mill Elementary Hillcrest High School Hollywood Elementary Humes Middle School Lanier Junior High Larose Lester Elementary Longview Middle School Oakhaven High School Riverview Middle School Sheffield High School Sherwood Middle School Spring Hill Elementary Springdale Treadwell Elementary Treadwell High School Trezevant High School Vance Middle School Westhaven Elementary Westside High School Westwood Elementary Westwood High School Winchester Elementary Booker T. Washington High School East High School Fairley High School Hamilton High School Kingsbury High School Manassas High School Middle College High School Mitchell Road High School Raleigh Egypt High School South Side High School Wooddale High School

Appendix C

System Response

Each system was given an opportunity to review and respond to the report. A copy of the system's written response begins on the next page.

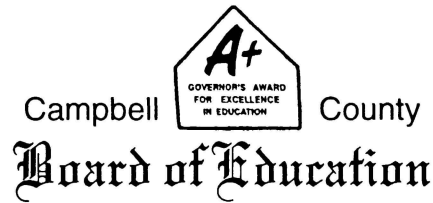
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August 26, 2002

Ethel R. Detch
Director, Office of Education Accountability
505 Deaderick Street, Suite 1700
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0268

Dear Ms. Detch:

After reviewing the draft review and analysis of the Campbell County School System's schools on notice report, I would like to inform you that I concur with your findings at Stony Fork School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David Chitwood'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Chitwood
Title I Director